besides other related issues;

(b) whether Government have taken any initiative for betterment of Indo-Bangladesh relations; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the results achieved so far?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) Indo-Bangladesh relations are founded on strong links of geography, history and culture. Government's commitment to maintaining frindly relations with all its neighbours, including Bangladesh, and to resolving all issues through dialogue and consultations was reiterated during the visit to Dhaka of Shri Brajesh Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister as his Special Envoy on 26-27 October, 2001. The Government of Bangladesh have expressed their keen desire to work with India for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the countries.

British Prime Minister's India Visit

510. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the British Prime Minister has, recently, visited India and held discussions on several issues;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the agreements signed between both the countries during the visit; and

(d) the extent to which Britain have decided to extend assistance to India to combat terrorism?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Prime Minister Tony Blair visited India on 6th October 2001 for discussions with Prime Minister on the prevailing international situation particularly in the context of the international coalition against terrorism and the launch of military action in Afghanistan. The need for a broad-based political structure in Afghanistan in the post-Taliban scenario was discussed.

(c) No agreements were signed during the visit.

(d) India and the UK have been working closely to counter international terrorism, especially under the framework of a Joint Working Group on International Terrorism and Drug Trafficking. Earlier this year, the UK proscribed

six major terrorist groups operating in India, under their Terrorism Act 2000. The changed international environment following the terrorist attacks in the US on 11th September 2001, have led the UK to press for the complete elimination of the threat posed by international terrorism. UK believes that sustained pressure needs to be put on those States that support, harbor or act in complicity with international terrorist groups. The UK condemns all terrorism and that includes terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. It believes that terrorism has to stop everywhere including in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mechanism to Decide Afghanistan's Future

511. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister has written to the heads of many prominent countries about the post Taliban Government in Afghanistan and India's concern about it;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating the names of such countries and their response thereto;

(c) whether Government, apart from this are using various diplomatic channels for the same objective; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes sir. Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has written to several Heads of State/Government about India's concerns and views regarding the future government structure in Afghanistan, and the need for appropriate framework for international consultation to promote this process. The letter was addressed to Heads of State/Government of Canada, China, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, Russia, Tazikistan, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

In the letter, Prime Minister elaborated India's stand that the future government in Afghanistan should be broad based, with equitable representation of different ethnic and religious groups; future political structure in Afghanistan should not be allowed to export terrorism or extremism; emphasised the urgency for tackling these issues in an international framework including countries which have legitimate interest in, and influence on these matters and the importance of reconstruction and rehabilitation in the post conflict Afghanistan and in this regard declared government's intention of extending a line of credit